



General store: Angie and Vernon Lhotte stand behind the counter at the Sampson Store. The store

once was a Methodist church. It is a regular stop for travelers on their way through Sampson.

Fragmented Sampson still home

Friendly people residing at these intersections

By Lisa Sumter

Press-Gazette

This rural community at the west end of Oconto County D marks the intersection of two school districts, two towns and three telephone service areas.

Children here attend the Oconto Falls or Pulaski school districts. The towns of Chase and Morgan meet in Sampson and residents pay phone bills to companies in Abrams, Oconto Falls or Pulaski.

Sampson, about 25 miles northwest of Green Bay, doesn't seem bothered by its fragmented makeup. No matter where they work or play, the community's 50 residents think of the friendly place as home.

A large golden retriever named Herman lounges on the front porch of the Sampson Store, owned by Vernon and Angie Lhotte, 2521 County C.

The Lhottes offer a friendly greeting to people who stop in this old-fashioned grocery store.

Sampson is along a popular bicycle route and cyclists often stop at the store, Angie Lhotte says.

"I fill up their water jugs and they get their little snacks and sit and visit awhile," she says. "You get to meet a lot of nice people that way."

Vernon Lhotte is famous in Sampson for his booyah. He often makes the tasty soup for church gatherings. When the

Press-Gazette photos
by Joan Gutheridge

Lhotte's seven children lived at home, they helped their father prepare his trademark recipe.

"One of our daughters lives in Krakow and we used to tease her that she could smell the booyah there because she'd always show up when we were cooking it," Angie Lhotte says.

Sampson started as a logging community. Two hotels, a cheese factory and a blacksmith shop once were here. Sampson Store was a Methodist Church years ago, Angie Lhotte says.

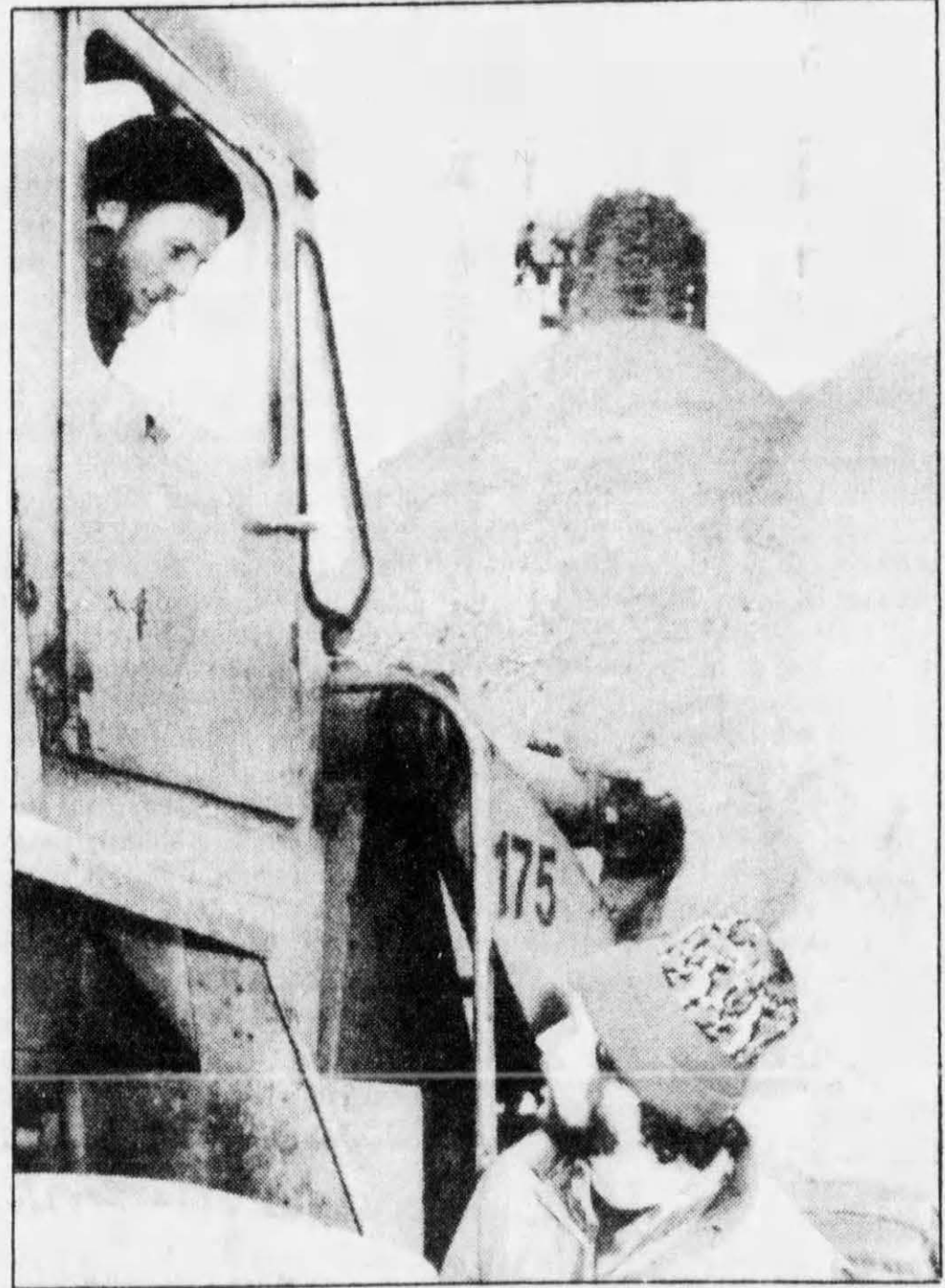
Now, a steady stream of trucks rolls through the community, hauling gravel from the community's six gravel pits. Several construction and excavation businesses operate here. Many residents work in Green Bay or Pulaski.

Doug Vandenheuvel, 7693 County Highway D, says Sampson and the surrounding area are ideal for hunting. Many Sampson residents are hunters who track "anything and everything" in season, Vandenheuvel says.

Nancy Robaidek, 2446 County C, describes Sampson as a proud place.

"When new people move in here we tell them this is a nice clean community and we want to keep it that way," she says with a smile.

When women in Sampson get married, chances are they will receive a carefully cro-



Digging in: Rodney Holtger, left, of Coleman and Jack Peters of Pulaski get ready to work at Robaidek's Gravel Pit, one of several gravel pits in Sampson.

cheted afghan from Elaine Pautz, 8289 County D. Retired from farming, Pautz creates the multi-colored afghans and delicate white doilies that are spread throughout her home.

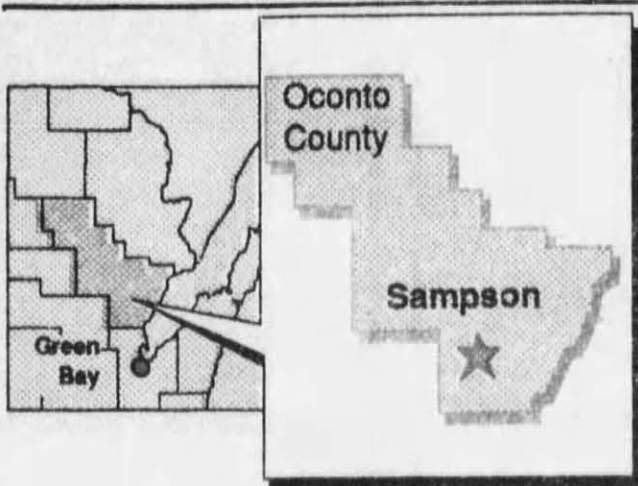
"I started crocheting when I was 6," she says. "It relaxes me."

Pautz says new families are moving into the area, but

many Sampson residents are retired.

"We used to talk about the 'older people' in the community and now we are the older people," she says.

Next week: Pulcifer in Shawano County



The Sampson file

- ☐ **Population:** 50 (estimate of local residents)
- ☐ **Elusive namesake:** Plenty of rumors are floating around Sampson about how the community got its name. Some say a minister named Sampson once lived here. Others say it was from a family by that name. Still

others say Sampson originally was Lampson but changed the name because another Wisconsin community had the name.

- ☐ **Sampson celebrity:** A Sampson native can be seen Sundays on WBAY-TV. The Rev. Ronald Lhotte of St. Gabriel the Archangel Church in Neenah officiates for the 7 a.m. Mass broadcast on Channel 2.